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## ENG 2011G-002: Literature, the Self, & the World

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English 2011—002 (Poetry)  
Literature, the Self, & the World  
Spring, 2003

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CH 3605 (581 6290)  
Office Hours:  
Thurs 1:30-3:30

Texts: Norton Anthology of Poetry, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed., Allison, ed.  
To Read a Poem, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., Hall

#### General Comments:

“’Tis the wind, and nothing more,” says the woeful, lonely voice of Edgar Poe’s legendary poem, “The Raven.” He’s trying to figure out who’s been “tap, tapping” at his chamber door, the way you might want to know who the bozo is who’s been banging at your dorm room door some sleepy morning. “Who’s there,” we ask, echoing the first line of Hamlet, and announcing, too, the central theme of this course.

Reading or hearing a poem is an attempt to answer this greatest of human questions, the question of identity. But every poem is an act of ventriloquism, and we can’t always know or trust who’s speaking. Perhaps it’s the poet, but it could be someone else, the way we create ourselves as we go along. Who are you anyway? Do you always sound the same, or are you not, like all of us, a person always in the process of becoming?

Poems are usually spoken by a single voice, but what kind of words does the speaker use and in what order? Is this person a hero or a creep, or, more likely, a little of both? Maybe he or she is in love like you, or perhaps has been hurt in that attempt, also like you? Or you’ll be reading Robert Frost’s poem, “A Servant to Servants,” and suddenly realize you are listening to your mother and understanding for the first time her joys and sorrows.

Frost will be one of the poets we’ll read a lot, as will Emily Dickinson and Robert Browning, and the John’s, Donne and Keats, plus several more contemporary voices that may speak in a more familiar way to you.

#### Requirements:

1. class participation
2. daily quizzes
3. two papers of 3-5 pages
4. final exam

#### Grades:

I do not calculate grades by percentage points. Instead, I consider your overall performance in the class. I do value hard work and serious effort. I also value a sense of humor and a positive attitude. Above all, I value your curiosity—your desire to learn.